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ABSTRACT

In January 1994, the Arizona State Board of Directors for Community Colleges (ASBDCC) conducted a survey of state four-year systems nationwide to determine the existence of standards regarding the transferability of associate degrees and associate degree students' academic standing at receiving four-year institutions. Questionnaires were mailed to the four-year systems in 49 states, with responses being received from 41 systems. Major findings included the following: (1) 22 of the responding states indicated that they had an arrangement or policy allowing for the transfer of the associate degree; (2) in these states, 13 stated that the standards were mandated by state boards, 4 that they were mandated by the legislature, and 5 that they were voluntary; (3) of the 41 responding states, 7 indicated that the associate degree satisfied general studies requirements, while 19 stated that it lead to some form of junior class standing at the four-year institution; and (4) responses varied widely with respect to the maximum number of credit hours that may be transferred from a community college, ranging from 54 to no maximum. Based on these findings, a 1993 recommendation by the ASBDCC's Task Force on Enrollment Growth that associate degree holders from the state's community colleges be guaranteed admission to a state public university as upper-division students was found to be consistent with national practice. (KP)

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ED 369 449

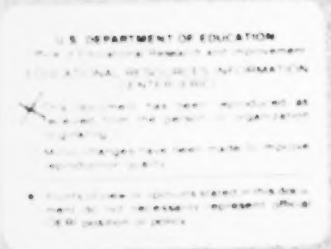
# The State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona

prepared by David C. Rubí

# Survey on the Transferability of the Associate's Degree to Four-Year Institutions

May 9, 1994

JC 940 276



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# SUMMARY

Survey on the Transferability of the
Associate's Degree to Four-Year Institutions

prepared by David C. Rubi
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State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona
May 9, 1994

This survey was conducted to determine the prevailing practice regarding the transferability of the associate's degree in each state's four-year system. This was motivated by recommendations made by the State Board's 1993 Task Force on Enrollment Growth Planning. The recommendation pertinent to the issue of transferability stated in part "Students who have graduated from a transfer curriculum at an Arizona Community College should be guaranteed admission to an Arizona Public University campus as an upper-division student."

Items of primary interest for this study were a) to determine whether statewide standards exist that provide for the transfer of a community college associate's degree to a four-year institution, b) if an associate's degree transfers, what level or class standing does it give the student in the four-year institution, and c) how such standards, if extant, were implemented. Major findings were

1. **Is there a statewide standard regarding the transfer of community college students with an associate's degree to your state's university?**

   A total of 27 of the 41 states responding (65.9%) have some type of arrangement or policy that allows for the transfer of the associate's degree, whether it is a statewide standard or not. Results show that while such standards are not universal, neither are they unusual or rare arrangements.

1a. **If yes, has this been mandated by the legislature, state-level boards or by voluntary arrangement between the colleges and universities?**

   Such standards, where they exist, are almost always due to some form of governmental action (state board being the most important), and not by voluntary arrangement.

2a. **Do the universities of your state accept the associate's degree to satisfy general studies requirements, all lower division work, admission to junior class standing, or other?**

   In total, 26 of 41 states (63.4%) accept the associate's degree for some form of transfer. Of these twenty-six, 19 (73.1%) indicated that transfer allowed for some form of junior class standing, and seven (26.9%) allowed transfer to meet the general studies requirement.

This survey shows that the recommendation cited above by the Task Force on Enrollment Growth is a common way of dealing with transfers from community colleges to four year institutions and should be explored as for implementation.

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Survey on the Transferability of the
Associate's Degree to Four-Year Institutions
May 9, 1994

The office of the State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona recently conducted a survey to determine the prevailing practice regarding the acceptability of the associate's degree in each state's four-year system.

Interest in this subject was largely motivated by a set of recommendations made to the Arizona Board of Regents (the state-level university governing body) by a recent State Board Task Force on Enrollment Growth Planning that stated in part:

> The Task Force recommends that the Arizona Board of Regents establish a policy on community college transfer students that contains the following essential elements:
>
> - As a matter of public policy, space must be made to accept into state supported baccalaureate programs those students who have attended Arizona community colleges for their lower division work, and have done well. Students who have graduated from a transfer curriculum at an Arizona Community College should be guaranteed admission to an Arizona Public University campus as an upper-division student.[1]

Although the two points in the recommendation above seem to be widespread goals for the community college family, State Board staff had no information as to whether or not either of these goals had been implemented to any extent throughout the United States.

Since the above recommendation suggested that "[s]tudents who have graduated from a transfer curriculum" would be the indicator of those students who had "done well", staff decided that the first step towards studying the feasibility of such a recommendation would be to determine if the associate's degree had any kind of standing as regards the transfer function in American higher education. To do this, staff devised a simple questionnaire to determine whether or not statewide standards exist that provide for the transfer of a community college associate's degree to a four-year institution. Secondly, if an associate's degree transfers, what does it accomplish for the student as far as class standing or for completing requirements. Staff was also interested in knowing how such standards, if extant, were implemented. The survey letter, as sent, reflected these items and consisted of the following questions:

1. Is there a statewide standard regarding the transfer of community college students with an associate's degree to your state's universities? ☐ yes ☐ no

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[1] Puyear, Donald E. et al. *Report of the Task Force on Community College Enrollment Growth Planning*. August 1993. Phoenix: State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona. p. iv.

a If yes, has this been mandated by the legislature, state-level boards or by voluntary arrangement between colleges and universities? ☐ legislatively mandated ☐ state board mandated ☐ voluntary

b Are there any publications regarding this policy? ☐ yes ☐ no
If yes, could you please send us a copy when you respond to this survey?

2 Do the universities of your state accept the associate's degree to satisfy (check one)
a ☐ general studies requirements ☐ all lower division work ☐ admission to junior class standing ☐ other (please detail)
b How many credit hours maximum may be transferred from community colleges to universities?

The survey also provided a space for written responses, which will appear later in this report, and a request for literature on their associate's degree transfer policy, if such a policy existed. The letter was mailed on January 4, 1994 with a requested return date of January 24, 1994. Staff has included all responses received up to March, 18, 1994 and to that date, the State Board office has received forty-one responses out of the forty-nine that were mailed. This is a response rate of 83.7%. A table summarizing the responses is included in the appendix to this document. Analysis of the findings follows.

**1. Is there a statewide standard regarding the transfer of community college students with an associate's degree to your state's university?**

Of the forty-one responses received to date, 22 (53.7%) responded "yes" that there is a statewide standard, while 19 (46.3%) responded "no." However, five of the 19 states the responded "no" indicated that an associate's degree was accepted for junior class standing in their state's four-year institutions. So, a total of 27 of the 41 states responding (65.9%) have some type of arrangement or policy that allows for the transfer of the associate's degree, whether it is a statewide standard or not. Results show that while such standards are not universal, neither are they unusual or rare arrangements.

Notes for question 1

1. ARKANSAS answered "yes" to question 1. However, upon review of the other answers and comments written on the survey, staff inferred that they do not have a statewide standard specifically for the transfer of the associate's degree and counted Arkansas as a "no." However, Arkansas does have a "State Minimum Core" which is transferable among state institutions.
2. HAWAII notes that standards are for the Hawaii system community colleges only (Hawaii has a joint two-year and four-year system).
3. IOWA notes that they have a statewide articulation agreement for the associate's with the public four-year institutions.
4. LOUISIANA notes that there are many articulation agreements among certain campuses, but no true, statewide standard exists.

5 MONTANA stated " our approach is a little off-base " Montana has a 30-hour Transferable Core Curriculum and utilizes transfer guide somewhat similar in concept to Arizona's Course Equivalency Guide

6 NEW MEXICO notes that its legislature passed a bill in 1992 that required students with an associate's degree to be accepted for transfer at junior status, but the bill was vetoed

7 OKLAHOMA notes that the transfer policy applies only to the associate of arts and the associate of sciences degrees

8 OREGON notes that this is for the associate of arts degree only

9 SOUTH CAROLINA answered "yes," but this is not for an associate's degree, but rather for the articulation of courses Staff marked answer as "no "

10 TEXAS identified a core of courses that would transfer, but the policy was not clear as to whether this core of courses was also part of the associate's degree

11 VERMONT In evaluating Vermont's response, staff marked their answer as a "yes" even though their response was "no" as far as the system's policy being "statewide" policy In literal terms, it is "system" policy, but because Vermont is a small state and because there is only one community college there, system policy in effect becomes statewide policy

**1a. If yes, has this been mandated by the legislature, state-level boards or by voluntary arrangement between the colleges and universities?**

Of the 22 states that indicated the existence of statewide standards, 13 (59 1%) responded that the standard was mandated by state-level boards (or college system) Four (18 2%) responded that the standard was mandated by the legislature Five more (22 7%) responded that the standard was voluntary Such standards, where they exist, are almost always due to some form of governmental action (state board being the most important), and not by voluntary arrangement

Notes for question 1a

1 KANSAS notes that its voluntary policy is between colleges, universities and both boards of control

2 VERMONT'S only community college belongs to the Vermont State Colleges system which is made up of three four-year colleges, a technical college and the Community College of Vermont The standard is in effect for only this system

3 VIRGINIA notes that "The policy was endorsed by both the VCCS State Board and the [State Council of Higher Education for Virginia] SCHEV is a 'coordinating board, hence actual adherence to the policy by the senior institutions is 'voluntary '"

**1b. Are there any publications regarding this policy?**

All states that indicated "yes" to question 1 above sent some form of documentation regarding their state's policy, except for New York

**2a. Do the universities of your state accept the associate's degree to satisfy general studies requirements, all lower division work, admission to junior class standing, or other?**

Of the 41 states responding to this survey, 19 (46.3%) responded that the associate's degree is accepted for admission to junior class standing. Many of these states had some sort of limitation on this admission status, but there seems to be a tendency towards this manner of accepting the associate's degree for transfer. Interestingly, of these 19 states, five of them had indicated that they did not have a statewide standard on associate's degree transfer.

Most of the states identifying "admission to junior class standing" also marked "satisfy general studies requirements" and/or "lower division work." Seven of the 41 (17.1%) indicated that the statewide standard for associate's degree satisfied only the general studies requirement for the respective four-year institution. One state, Washington, noted that not only did their associate's degree complete the general studies requirement, that it also *guaranteed admission* to a state university.

In total, there were 26 out of 41 states (63.4%) that accept the associate's degree for transfer either in satisfaction of the general studies requirements or for junior class standing. Of these, 19 of the 26 (73.1%) indicated that the transfer allowed for some form of junior class standing, and seven (26.9%) allowed transfer to meet the general studies requirement.

The balance of the answers indicated either no answer or that the degree transfer policy varied depending on articulation agreements, the university to which the student transferred, and other factors. See the appendix for a summary of the answers and the notes below for more detailed explanations.

Notes for question 2a

1. ALABAMA noted that the transfer policy tends to vary from university to university and by program or major.
2. ALASKA has only one community college. Ten other institutions in rural areas used to be community colleges and still function very much like them, but are now branch campuses of the universities. All credits at these institutions transfer.
3. CALIFORNIA marked "other" as its responses and states that they have no systemwide, agreed-upon policy on the associate's degree structure as it pertains to transfer.
4. COLORADO notes that general studies transfer is guaranteed by policy statewide. Individual articulation occasionally guarantees the entire degree.
5. FLORIDA marked "other" as their response to this question. However, their response states "satisfies all of the above." We recorded the answer accordingly.
6. HAWAII notes that its policy is still in the developmental stages.
7. ILLINOIS indicates that all other courses beyond the general studies are accepted on a course-by-course basis.

8 IOWA notes that junior class standing is only in one college of liberal arts and sciences or equivalent college

9 KENTUCKY notes that all of the above responses may apply in some cases, it depends on senior institution agreements and courses completed by the student

10 LOUISIANA notes that numerous institutions have separate agreements which cover all the areas mentioned above

11 MARYLAND notes that the general studies requirement is met by the associate's, but "in theory — not always in reality "

12 MASSACHUSETTS notes, "usually "

13 MICHIGAN states that the transfer depends on a review of each college faculty within each university Individual courses transfer as well as associate's degrees

14 MINNESOTA notes that credits beyond what are accepted for general studies are evaluated on a course-by-course basis, and that many students attain junior class standing in this manner

15 MISSOURI states that general studies are met if a student completes the "model requirement " This applies only to lower division requirements

16 NEBRASKA notes that the acceptance of the associate's degree for junior class standing is only at Chadron State College

17 NEVADA notes that the associate's degree is accepted for junior class standing, but that it does not certify satisfaction of all university lower division requirements

18 NEW MEXICO notes that the associate's does not automatically satisfy any of the educational levels listed

19 OKLAHOMA guidelines state in part "A student who has completed the prescribed lower division requirements of a State System institution developed in accordance with the standards set forth in Section 1 of this policy may transfer into a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree program at any senior institution of the State System and be assured of completing his or her program in sequential fashion " However, the policy goes on to indicate that the senior institution may require the transferring student to complete additional general education work for the degree

20 OREGON states that the junior class standing is for admission and registration purposes only

21 RHODE ISLAND reports that the associate's degree can be used for "some of each," i e , general studies, lower division or junior class standing, but that policies vary between institutions

22 SOUTH CAROLINA notes that all articulated courses in the associate's degree will transfer

23 TENNESSEE notes that if a student transfers with an associate's degree, the student is admitted in junior status Otherwise, the receiving institution evaluates transfer credit on a course equivalency basis The limit is defined in residency, not transfer hours, and this varies from institution to institution

24 TEXAS Staff counted Texas' answer as "general studies" even though they answered "other" Texas has a transferable core curriculum of 45 hours that seems similar in concept to what is referred to as "general studies" in other states

25 VERMONT states that within the Vermont State Colleges system the associate's is accepted for junior class status when going from its community college to one of its four-year institutions

26 VIRGINIA'S policy states that "Students who have earned an associate degree based upon a baccalaureate-oriented sequence of courses should be considered to have met lower-division general-education requirements of senior institutions."

27 WASHINGTON states that students with an associate's degree satisfy the four-year institution's general studies requirements and also are ensured admission to a public university

28 WEST VIRGINIA'S policy states " students completing a two-year associate's degree at public institutions governed by the West Virginia Board of Regents shall generally, upon transfer to a baccalaureate level degree-granting institution, have junior level status "

**2b. How many credit hours maximum may be transferred from community colleges to universities?**

The answers to this question are varied. They have been summarized in the table in the appendix to this report.

The appendix on the following page contains a table that summarizes the responses to the survey. This table is current as of March 18, 1994. For any item in the table marked with an asterisk (*), please consult the notes above for the corresponding question.

**Conclusion**

The survey indicates that the transferability of the associate's degree to four-year institutions is a relatively common practice. This is by no means a universal practice, and there is no uniform method on how to count the degree for transfer, but the practice exists nonetheless. For this reason, the recommendation made by the Task Force on Enrollment Growth that states "Students who have graduated from a transfer curriculum at an Arizona Community College should be guaranteed admission to an Arizona Public University campus as an upper-division student " is in line with a practice common nationwide, and should be explored as a possible recommendation for implementation.

David C. Rubi
Director of Research, Planning & Minority Relations
State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona
May 9, 1994

Appendix to "Survey on the Transferability of the Associate's Degree to Four-Year Institutions" May 9, 1994

| | State | 1. Is there a statewide standard re. transfer of students with an AA to state's university? | 1a. If YES how implemented | 1b. Are there publications on this policy? | 2. Do the universities of your state accept the assoc. degree to satisfy | 2b. How many credit hours maximum may be transferred from community colleges to universities? (quarter hrs. changed to semester hrs.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Alabama | NO | | | VARIES* | 60 3 (96 qu. hrs.) |
| 2 | Alaska | NO | | | no answer* | 72 |
| 3 | Arkansas | NO* | | | NONE | VARIES* |
| 4 | California | NO | | | VARIES* | 70 |
| 5 | Colorado | NO | | | GS, JC* | VARIES 64 - 72 |
| 6 | Delaware | NO | | | JC | NO MAX. SPECIFIED |
| 7 | Florida | YES | legislature | YES | GS, LD, JC* | 60 MINIMUM FOR AA* |
| 8 | Georgia | YES | state board | YES | LD, JC | 54 (90 qu. hrs.) |
| 9 | Hawaii | YES* | voluntarily | YES | GS, JC* | 60 |
| 10 | Idaho | YES | state board | YES | GS, LD, JC | 70 MAX. LOWER DIV. |
| 11 | Illinois | YES | state board | YES | GS* | NO MAX. (USUALLY 60 - 70) |
| 12 | Iowa | YES | voluntarily | YES | JC* | 65 |
| 13 | Kansas | YES | voluntary | YES | JC | DEPENDS ON PROGRAM/MAJOR |
| 14 | Kentucky | NO | | | VARIES* | NO MAX. ALL MUST TRANS. |
| 15 | Louisiana | NO* | | | VARIES* | NO STATEWIDE LIMIT |
| 16 | Maryland | YES | state board | YES | GS* | no answer |
| 17 | Massachusetts | YES | state board | YES | JC* | MIN OF 60, NO MAX. PER SE |
| 18 | Michigan | NO | | | VARIES* | NO STATEWIDE LIMIT |
| 19 | Minnesota | YES | voluntarily | YES | GS* | VARIES* |
| 20 | Mississippi | YES | voluntarily | YES | JC | 64 |
| 21 | Missouri | YES | state board | YES | GS, JC* | NOT SPECIFIED* |
| 22 | Montana | NO* | | | | |
| 23 | Nebraska | NO | | | JC* | VARIES |
| 24 | Nevada | NO | | | JC* | VARIES* |
| 25 | New Hampshire | NO | | | no answer | NO ANSWER |
| 26 | New Jersey | YES | state board | YES | GS | NOT STIPULATED* |
| 27 | New Mexico | NO* | | | NONE* | NO STATEWIDE LIMIT |
| 28 | North Carolina | NO | | | GS, JC | 54 (90 qu. hrs.) |
| 29 | New York | YES | legislature | YES* | GS | 60 |
| 30 | Oklahoma | YES* | state board | YES | OTHER* | NO LIMIT* |
| 31 | Oregon | YES* | legislature | YES* | GS, JC* | 64 8 (108 qu. hrs.) |
| 32 | Pennsylvania | NO | | | no answer | no answer |
| 33 | Rhode Island | YES | state board | YES | VARIES* | 60 |
| 34 | South Carolina | NO | | | VARIES* | 60 plus* |
| 35 | Tennessee | NO* | | | GS, JC* | NO ANSWER |
| 36 | Texas | NO | | | OTHER* | 66 |
| 37 | Utah | YES | state board | YES | GS | NO LIMIT |
| 38 | Vermont | YES* | system policy* | YES | JC* | NOT SPECIFIED |
| 39 | Virginia | YES* | state board* | YES | GS, JC* | NO MAX. |
| 40 | Washington | YES | legislature | YES | GS with guaranteed admission* | 54 (90 qu. hrs.) |
| 41 | West Virginia | YES | state board | YES | JC* | 64 - 72 |

* for the items marked with an asterisk (*), please consult the notes in the text under the corresponding question.

Prepared by David C. Rubi, State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona



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